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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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E.O.11652:N/A
TAGS: AORG, WMO
SUBJECT: UN ADMINISTRATION: ARABIC AS OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGE IN WMO

REF: GENEVA'S O8539

1. US DELEGATION'S EXPERIENCE WITH USER PAY FORMULA DURING 32ND UNGA DISCUSSION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE SERVICES WAS DECIDEDLY UNSATISFACTORY. REVIEW OF THIS APPROACH TO US GOAL AND HALTING LANGUAGE PROLIFERATION IN UN SEEMS INDICATED.

2. LEGITIMATE PRIDE OF ARAB DELEGATIONS IN CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ARABIC WAS OFFENDED BY ATTACHMENT OF A PRICE TAG TO ITS USE IN UNITED NATIONS. FRENCH AND SPANISH DELEGATIONS JOINED ATTACK UPON US PROPOSAL FOR STUDY OF USER PAY FORMULA WITH DEMOGOGIC, BUT HIGHLY TELLING ACCUSATION THAT IT REPRESENTED "LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM."

3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE FEAR IN SECRETARIAT CIRCLES THAT USER PAY FORMULA MAY IN FACT ACCELERATE ADDITION OF MORE OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGES TO THE UN. IT
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WAS FREQUENTLY POINTED OUT TO US DELEGATION DURING 32ND UNGA THAT GERMANS AND JAPANESE NOT ONLY COULD AFFORD TO PAY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH INTRODUCTION OF THEIR LANGUAGES INTO UN, BUT COULD ALMOST BE EXPECTED TO DO SO WERE USER PAY FORMULA ADOPTED.

4. USUN HAS CONCLUDED THAT PROPOSALS TO ADOPT USER PAY

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FORMULA QUICKLY REACH POINT OF DIMINISHING RETURNS.
WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT DEFENSES AGAINST ADDITIONAL
OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGES IN UN AND UN AGENCIES
CAN BE ERECTED BY SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACTICS. THERE
WOULD INCLUDE EARLY CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY FRENCH AND
SPANISH SPEAKING DELEGATIONS (POSSIBLY AT FOREIGN
MINISTRY LEVEL) TO POINT OUT THAT IT DOES NOT SERVE
INTERESTS ANY OF US TO HAVE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES
INTRODUCED INTO UN. WHATEVER INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE
PREFERENCES, COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEM OF ALL OF US WILL
BE COMPLICATED - AND OUR EFFECTIVENESS IN THE ORGANI-
ZATION REDUCED - BY FURTHER MULTIPLICATION OF LANGUAGES
IN UN SYSTEM. ALL ENGLISH, FRENCH AND SPANISH-SPEAKING
MEMBER STATES HAVE AN INTEREST IN PREVENTING INTRODUCTION
OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES INTO UN SYSTEM.
5. USUN BELIEVES THAT IN DEBATES ON LANGUAGE SERVICES
IN UN AND UN ORGANIZATIONS - AND DEBATE ON THIS HIGHLY
VOLATILE AND SENSITIVE SUBJECT SHOULD BE
SEVERE TO RESTRICTED WHERE IT CANNOT BE AVOIDED -
PRINCIPAL STRESS SHOULD BE ON MANAGEMENT COMPLEXITIES
THAT ADDITION OF EACH NEW OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGE
ADDS TO ORGANIZATION'S OPERATIONS. USUN BELIEVES
WITH PROPER ADVANCE NOTIFICATION, SECRETARIATS WILL BE
ABLE TO POINT THESE OUT WITH RATHER TELLING EFFECT
AND WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO ANY PRESENT OR
PROPOSED OFFICIAL OR WORKING LANGUAGE.
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6. SECOND SENTENCE, PARA ONE SHOULD READ "US GOAL
OF HALTING" VICE "US GOAL AND HALTING."

7. THIRD SENTENCE PARA 4 SHOULD READ "THESE WOULD
INCLUDE" VICE "THERE WOULD INCLUDE"
INNER CLAUSE, FIRST SENTENCE PARA 5 SHOULD READ
"SHOULD BE SEVERELY RESTRICTED" VICE "SHOULD BE
SEVERE TO RESTRICTED." YOUNG

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